

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON

JUN 8 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Service of Cuban Volunteers in U. S. Armed Forces

In response to your instruction at the NSC meeting of 5 May 1961, the Department of Defense has prepared the attached program to enable Cuban volunteers to serve in the U. S. armed forces.

There is at present no census of the Cuban exile population in the United States which accurately reflects the number of males between the military ages of 17 to 26. However, from figures supplied by the Cuban Refugee Emergency Center in Miami, out of a total of 25,000 of all ages registered at the center 17,350 are adults of whom approximately 75% fall within the 35-50 age group. On this basis it appears likely that no more than 3,500 are of military age. If this figure represents the upper limit, the number who would be interested in volunteering for service with the U. S. armed forces will probably be considerably smaller. In the absence of a census, the plan has assumed that the number of volunteers will be not more than 2,000 and may be as few as 800.

There are some legal barriers to the enlistment of aliens in the U. S. armed forces. These barriers, however, do not prevent their voluntary induction if they are between the ages of 18-26. It is therefore planned to make use of the existing mechanisms of the U. S. Selective Service System to provide special quotas for induction into the three services of Cuban volunteers in this age group as they become identified and available. An exception in the law allows the enlistment of aliens up to age 31 in the regular Navy and up to age 28 in the regular Marine Corps. The plan makes use of this provision as well.

Special measures for security screening have been stipulated.

The Department of Health, Education and Welfare has agreed to provide and fund any needed English language training prior to actual induction of volunteers. The purpose of this arrangement is to avoid

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Defense NLR-76-147
BY NARS Date 1-22-77

SecDef Cont. No. C-607

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OSD, Subject: Service of Cuban Volunteers in U. S. Armed Forces

the necessity for assembling Cuban personnel in one place for training under military auspices. With their English language training completed before entry into the armed services, Cubans can be processed and trained as individuals along with U. S. personnel. In addition, this arrangement assures the military services of trainable people from the start, and will tend to cut down attrition rates after induction.

Although the Cuban volunteers will join the armed forces as individuals and will be trained as such along with U. S. personnel, the military services will be given informal instructions to make provisions for readily identifying and locating each of these volunteers should it ever become necessary.

The services will be required to give these volunteers the most advanced individual training possible. However, assignment to training or duty requiring access to classified information will be held to a minimum.

No increase in manpower ceilings is proposed. Once language training has been funded by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, additional costs to the military services for the processing of these volunteers can be handled within present budgets.

Robert S. Mc Namara

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Defense NLK-26-147
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